

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

Replace the claims with the following rewritten version:

1-17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A beverage extraction assembly for application to beverage extraction machines for extracting a beverage from a particulate substance contained in a cartridge, comprising:

a support connectable to a water outlet of a beverage extraction machine;

a cartridge holder removably mounted on said support for holding a cartridge containing a particulate substance, said cartridge comprising at least a first cartridge port protruding outwardly from its upper surface for receiving water under pressure;

said support comprising a water inlet port connectable to said water outlet of the beverage extraction machine, for delivering said water to said first cartridge port, said water inlet port configured to receive said first cartridge port therein;

said cartridge holder comprising a bottom aperture for providing an escape for the extracted beverage;

said water inlet port of said support comprising ~~means for providing~~ a radial fluid-tight seal for sealing between said water inlet port and said first cartridge port during the beverage extraction when said first cartridge port is inserted into said water inlet port, so as to prevent the water from contaminating any internal component or surface of the extraction assembly and from lapping the outer surface of the cartridge.

19. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 18, further comprising an injection nozzle assembly that is integral to or connected ~~to~~ with said water inlet port and that faces the cartridge holder, said injection nozzle assembly being engageable with said first cartridge port so as to inject said water under pressure into said cartridge.

20. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim ~~18~~ 19, wherein said nozzle assembly comprises:

a hollow nozzle body, having an internal through cavity for allowing passage of water therethrough from a first open end of said nozzle body, which is connected with said water inlet port, to a second open end of said nozzle body, which receives said first cartridge port therein;

a needle integral with said nozzle body, for providing an access to the inside of said first cartridge port.

21. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 20, wherein said needle is a separate piece secured into an annular projection formed on said internal through cavity.

22. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 20, wherein said needle comprises an axial cavity communicating with the internal through cavity of said nozzle body, said needle further comprising radial through openings communicating with said axial cavity for supplying water in a substantially radial direction.

23. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 20, wherein said nozzle body comprises an annular recess at said second open end, so as to house said ~~means for providing a radial fluid-tight seal~~.

24. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said ~~means for providing a radial fluid-tight seal~~ comprise comprises an O-ring.

25. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said ~~means for providing a radial fluid-tight seal~~ comprise comprises a rubber gasket having a central pierceable portion and a peripheral thicker portion, said rubber gasket being plugging said first cartridge port before said needle pierces it.

26. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 18, further comprising a cartridge ejector mounted on said support, for keeping said cartridge pressed inside said cartridge holder until said cartridge holder is at least partially removed from said support.

27. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 26, wherein said cartridge ejector is substantially toroidal and is mounted around said nozzle assembly, said cartridge ejector comprising spring means abutting its upper surface and a lower surface of said support.

28. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said support comprises a connector member comprising said water inlet port and comprises a bayonet holder on which said cartridge holder is securable according to a bayonet fitting.

29. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said cartridge holder is substantially cup-shaped so as to house said cartridge, the inner surface

of said cartridge holder being shaped substantially complementary to the outer shape of said cartridge.

30. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said bottom aperture of said cartridge holder is large enough to allow a beverage outlet spout integrated in said cartridge to pass through said aperture, in order to prevent said cartridge holder from being contaminated by the extracted beverage output from said cartridge and, accordingly, so that the same beverage extraction machine and the same extraction assembly can be consecutively used over time with cartridges containing different particulate substances.

31. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim ~~18~~ 19, wherein said nozzle assembly comprises:

a hollow nozzle body, having an internal through cavity for allowing passage of water therethrough from a first open end of said nozzle body, that is connected with said water inlet port, to a second open end of said nozzle body, that is engageable with said first cartridge port, said hollow nozzle body comprising a tip end at said second open end which is insertable into said first cartridge port, so as to deliver said water under pressure inside said cartridge without using an injection needle.

32. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 31, wherein said tip end comprises said ~~means for providing a radial fluid-tight seal which are mounted on its an~~ external surface of said tip end.

33. (Currently amended) The extraction assembly of claim 31, wherein said ~~means for providing a radial fluid-tight seal~~ comprises ~~comprise~~ an O-ring installed into an annular recess formed on the external surface of said tip end of said nozzle assembly.

34. (Previously presented) The extraction assembly of claim 18, wherein said cartridge comprises:

a main body comprising a cup portion and a lid portion, the cup portion comprising a base, a sidewall and a rim opposed to said base, the lid portion being fixedly attached to said rim of the cup portion so as to define an internal volume of said cartridge;

the internal volume of said cartridge housing the particulate substance comprised within filtering means for retaining said particulate substance and for percolating fluid

substances therethrough;

said lid portion comprising said cartridge port defining an inlet passage for said water;

a tappet being arranged inside a conical hollow volume defined between said filtering means and said base, so as to pierce said base when a pressure is applied to said base towards said internal volume, thus opening a normally closed cup port and forming a spout;

and wherein said cartridge holder is internally shaped so as to apply said pressure to the base of said cartridge towards said internal volume when the cartridge holder is secured to said support.